

Opening Session of the World Urban Forum of Nanjing

Address of Mayor Zhang Guangning

Co-President of UCLG and Mayor of Guangzhou

3 November

Honorable Under-Secretary-General Ms. Anna Tibaijuka, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to participate at the 4th World Urban Forum as Co-president of United Cities and Local Governments. On behalf of UCLG, I would like to thank both UN-Habitat and the Chinese government for making this possible, and I would like to extend a warm welcome to the members of UCLG.

The 21st century is a century for cities. With economic globalization playing an increasingly important role, urbanization is speeding up. Every day, over 180.000 new inhabitants are moving into urban areas. This is one more middle-sized European City in the world every day! Cities and local governments are responsible for providing urban citizens with public services, such as employment, housing, transportation, culture, education, and hygiene. All cities and local governments have a crucial role to play in promoting sustainable development of cities, and reaching a balance among the urban population, resources, and the

environment. It is an important topic for the whole world, while facing rapid urbanization, to overcome problems of the huge population, lack of resources, environmental pollution, and traffic jams, and to realize harmonic urbanization.

Local governments, national governments, and the international community are dependent on one another, and we need to support one another to meet global challenges. This is of great importance for creating a fairer and sustainable world. In recent years, Guangzhou, the city I come from, has established friendly relations with many cities around the world. We have deepened mutual understanding and friendship, and have strengthened cooperation with regard to the above issues, realizing great results and promoting urban sustainable development. We are confident that it is beneficial for harmonic urbanization to strengthen cooperation and exchanges with cities all over the world.

The vision of United Cities and Local Governments is to promote exchanges and cooperation among cities and local governments of the world. The cities and association members of *UCLG* represent over half the world's population in 136 countries across seven world regions. Over 1000 cities are direct members of *UCLG*. In addition, over 120 national associations representing all

the cities and local governments in a single country are members of our World Organization. As Co-President of UCLG, I would like to reiterate that we attach great importance to the theme of this year's World Urban Forum. My colleagues around the world and I are fully aware of the significance of harmonic urbanization. We will participate in some very important sessions of the forum, and conduct discussions under this theme. Topics to be discussed include: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals targets; Contributing to the Mitigation of and ensuring adaptation to Climate Change effects; Cooperating with the UN and its member countries to improve local governance; Putting our knowledge to use in collaboration with cities in need through city to city cooperation and providing inputs to the Aid Effectiveness debate; and Contributing to the development of international policy on Public Basic Services based on our broad daily experience.

Ladies and gentlemen, our appeal to you is that the UN and its member states will stimulate and build close contacts with local authorities and their associations, including UCLG, to disseminate United Nations goals and values, and to share lessons of best practice on ways and means to implement the Millennium Declaration. We, at the World Organization are building on our common concerns and making our differences a source of

inspiration. On behalf of my fellow mayors from around the world I would like to offer you our commitment to work towards a better future and request your support to include the local governments perspective in shaping the future of humanity.

Finally, on behalf of UCLG, I thank you and I expect fruitful results from this forum!